

v.52, no. 1 (Feb 2001)

# SACRED JOURNEY

---

THE JOURNAL OF  
FELLOWSHIP IN  
PRAYER

~  
FEBRUARY 2001

---

# SACRED JOURNEY<sup>®</sup>

THE JOURNAL OF FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

*The mission of Fellowship in Prayer is  
to encourage and support  
a spiritual orientation to life,  
to promote the practice of  
prayer,  
meditation,  
and service to others,  
and to help bring about  
a deeper spirit of unity  
among humankind.*

# C O N T E N T S

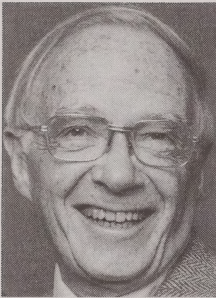
Vol. 52 No.1, February 2001

Serving Others <i>Paul Walsh</i>	2
In This Issue <i>Rebecca Laird</i>	5
QUESTIONS & ANSWERS	
Icons of Mercy <i>Jim Forest</i>	7
ILLUMINATIONS	15
PRAYING WITH OUR HANDS	
Embodied Prayer in the World's Spiritual Traditions <i>Jon M. Sweeney</i>	17
A TRANSFORMING EXPERIENCE	
The Day God Talked to Me <i>Gerry Lancto</i>	25
POETRY	31
SPIRITUAL AWARENESS	
Being Centered At the Center of Being <i>Alison Davis</i>	33
THE WAYS OF PRAYER	
Accept a Mystery <i>Arthur Caliendo</i>	37
SPIRITUAL PRACTICE	
The Art of Sacred Chant <i>Laura Bernstein</i>	42
PRAYERS	45
BOOKS WE'VE ENJOYED	47

Cover photo by Katia Ancona.



## Serving Others



Recently, a reader noted that Fellowship in Prayer's mission statement calls for us to encourage a spiritual orientation to life and to promote the practice of prayer, meditation, and service to others. "In what way," she asked, "does Fellowship in Prayer practice service to others?"

Well, I thought about it and realized, that in addition to our journal and our newly redesigned website ([www.sacredjourney.org](http://www.sacredjourney.org)), we provide a great many services that, in their quiet way, do much to help others on their sacred journey.

For example, as I look out a second floor window of our office, I see a sizeable group of high school age youngsters waiting their turn to walk the labyrinth, lovingly laid out in our back yard by Trime Lhamo, a Buddhist nun who is one of our trustees. Over the course of a year, a large number of individuals and groups, young and old, from nearby hospitals and schools, find their way to the sacred ground of our labyrinth and the still, quiet space at the center where the world and its troubles drop away.

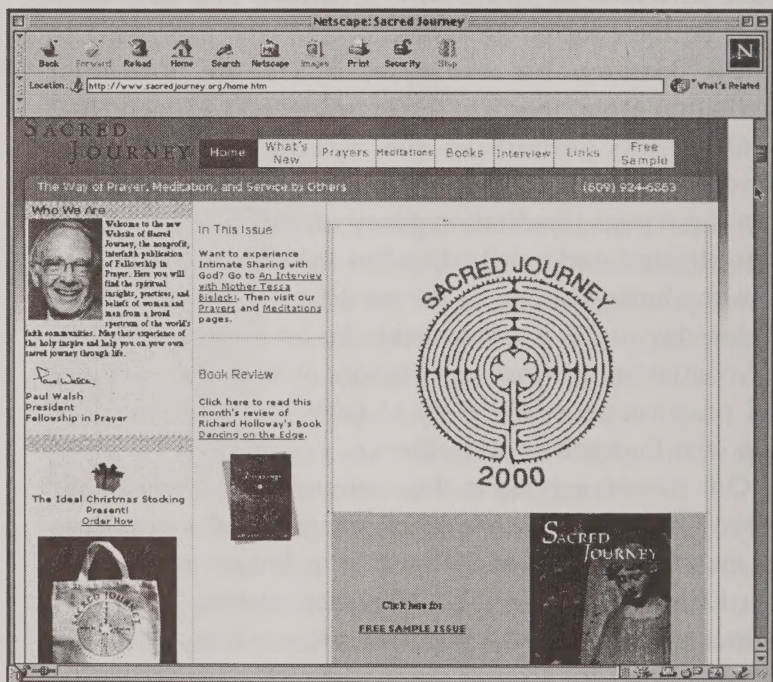
Our conference room is used seven days a week by a variety of community groups—women and men of different faith traditions, or none, who need a free, quiet space in which to meet, pray, meditate, and help each other on their sacred journeys.

On Sunday, for example, a Tibetan Buddhist meditation group meets in the morning, and a Thich Nhat Hanh group gathers in the afternoon to practice mindfulness and listen to tapes of their teacher. On Monday, a yoga/meditation group unwinds and stretches their physical and spiritual bodies in this place of refuge from the hurley-burley of the world around them. Every Wednesday night, a group meets for an evening of silent and communal prayers, meditation, *lectio divina*, singing, and practices from a variety of faith traditions that can help heal themselves and others.

Our newest service to the community is *Dharma Talk*, a thirty minute cable television program televised from the meditation room of Fellowship in Prayer every week over RCN, Princeton's cable television system. It features Dharma teachers and meditation masters from the Buddhist lineages around the world who will discuss his or her lineage, teachings, and, traditions. The hosts will also broadcast a community calendar of local and national events and retreats. This nonprofit, educational program appeals to everyone interested in the truths, practices, and Buddhist wisdom popularized by the Dalai Lama and by recent movies like *Kundun*.

Serving others—all who want not only to enrich their own faith but also to explore the treasures of the world's many faith traditions—is at the heart of Fellowship in Prayer's mission. We hope that we are succeeding.

# Come visit us!

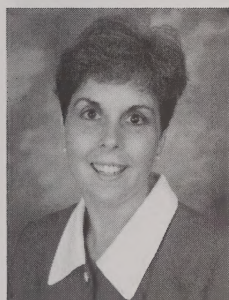


## SACRED JOURNEY'S New Web Site!

[www.sacredjourney.org](http://www.sacredjourney.org)



## In This Issue

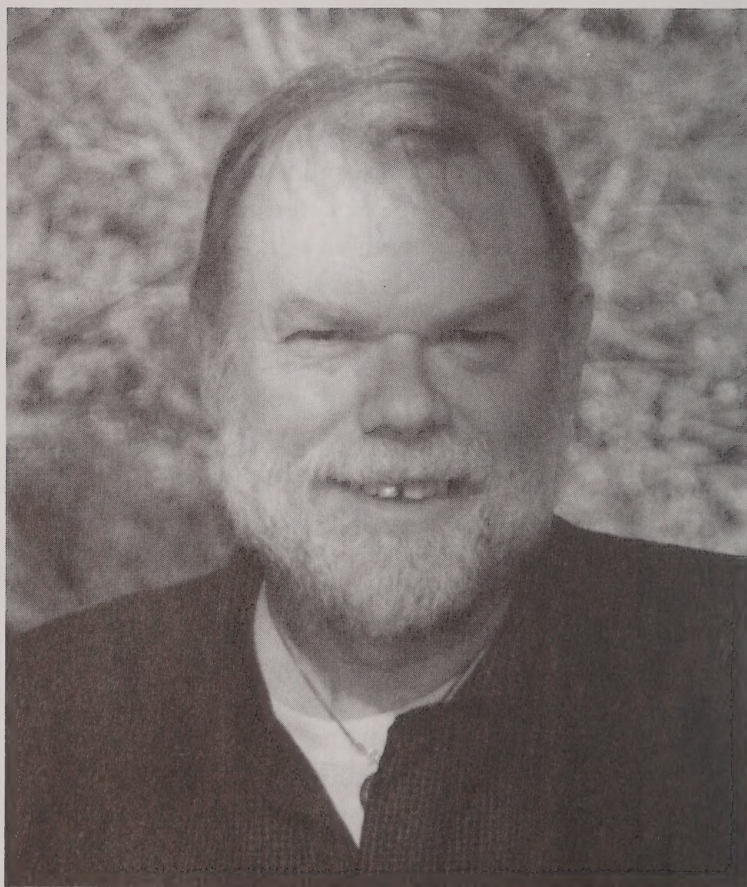


Recently Jim Forest, secretary of the Orthodox Peace Fellowship, spoke in Princeton and called each of us an "icon," a window on the divine. Jim explores this holy idea in this month's *Questions & Answers* feature. Jon Sweeney probes a parallel idea in "Praying with our Hands" while

Alison Davis describes the body as an "amazing instrument which transforms spiritual energy into the deeds of daily life." Gerry Lancto retraces a wintery walk that taught her that good is never forgotten. Two poets explore the indelible divine mark we wear. Fellowship in Prayer trustee, Arthur Caliendo, tells of a mysterious, life-changing prayer and Laura Bernstein introduces us to sacred chant. Reviews of worthy volumes to occupy a cold, winter's night fill out the pages of this issue.

Lest I get preoccupied with contemplating how I might be an icon of God, let me witness to my frail humanity: Last month we misprinted Mary Murphy's Internet address. Here's the corrected address where more of her stories can be found: <http://www.albany.net/~hello/>. As always. Blessings.

Jim Forest





# QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

## Icons of Mercy



*Jim Forest, the secretary of the Orthodox Peace Fellowship, is a journalist, author, and long-term peace activist. A New Jersey native, Mr. Forest has traveled widely in Russia, lived in Israel and Europe and is the author of many books, including The Ladder of the Beatitudes, Praying with Icons, Living with Wisdom, a biography of Thomas Merton, and Love is the Measure, a biography of Dorothy Day. Forest lives in the Netherlands and was received into the Orthodox Church in 1988. The Orthodox Peace Fellowship publishes a journal, In Communion, and hosts a website chock-full of news, prayers, and background information used by individuals and news organizations on what churches are doing for peace in the Orthodox world. Visit [www.incommunion.org](http://www.incommunion.org) to learn more. Jim recently spoke on the "Treasures of Eastern Orthodoxy" at an event co-sponsored by Fellowship in Prayer. The morning following his talk, I asked him to make clear the connections between his understanding of people as "icons" of God and the essentially spiritual task of peacemaking.*

**Rebecca Laird: What do you mean when you say each person is an icon of God?**

**Jim Forest:** During the Orthodox liturgy a deacon or priest periodically comes out into the sanctuary and incenses, or gently swings the censor which holds burning incense, near the icons which represent the acts of Christ's mercy and the lives of the saints. Then all of the people are blessed with incense. And if you had to choose between the two, it would be more important to incense the people, for we are in the most intimate way, the image of God. We are reminded in the liturgy: You are the bearer of Christ. If you begin to take that notion seriously, it changes the way you live. Trying to see the image of God, even in your most hated enemy, becomes a central part of life. And if your spiritual life doesn't begin to include your enemy, you haven't yet begun, for it isn't possible to truly follow Christ and to hate.

**How might attending a beautiful worship service as one might go to a spiritual filling station impact everyday actions?**

Let me answer that by telling a story about Mother Maria Skobtsova. Born into an aristocratic Russian family, she left home when the Bolsheviks overthrew the government in 1917 and moved to Anapa, a village on the Black Sea coast where she became the mayor, married and had two children. In 1923 threatened with assassination, she made her way to France. In Paris, her second child died and this tragedy led Maria to a profound conversion. She immersed herself in efforts to help destitute refugees in prisons, mental asylums, or slums. Increasingly she

emphasized the religious dimension of the work. She realized that each person is the very icon of God incarnate in the world. With this recognition came the need to embrace and venerate each revelation of God in her brothers and sisters with unconditional love. After her marriage ended, Maria became a nun and leased a house that became a chapel, soup kitchen, and place of dialogue where leading emigre intellectuals debated the relation between faith and social questions. Mother Maria summed it all up: "The meaning of the liturgy must be translated into life."

The final act of Mother Maria's life was to talk her way into the Velodrome d'Hiver in 1942 when thousands of Jews had been rounded up in the sports stadium. Assisted by the garbage collectors, she smuggled out Jewish children in garbage bins and saved their lives. The Gestapo arrested her in 1943. On Good Friday, 1945, Maria was sent to the gas chamber in the Ravensbruck concentration camp. She left these words for us, "At the Last Judgement I shall not be asked whether I was successful at my ascetic exercises, nor how many bows and prostrations I made. Instead I shall be asked, Did I feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick and the prisoners. This is all I shall be asked."

**How has becoming Orthodox changed your understanding of peacemaking?**

One of the big problems I have had to struggle with in my life is succumbing to the danger of reducing things to ideology. Peace can easily become such an abstraction and ideological ideal. I can easily remember conversations



in the peace movement when there was more attention paid to the use of gender-specific pronouns than to the content of what was being said. Communication hardly happened at all. We were policing each other's blinders rather than listening to what each was trying to say.

In earlier years, I also trusted that peace organizations would be more sensitive to the sacredness of life, but they weren't. That suggested to me that there has been a collapse of the link between the spiritual life and the peace movement. Peace has become an ideology which is tailored to current slogans. There is nothing at the center.

Becoming Orthodox put liturgy and communion at the center of my peace work. I discovered in the Orthodox tradition, and this would be true ideally in all Christianity, that preparing for communion requires that you recognize areas in yourself where you have been unable to forgive or remain unaware of your own sin. There is a constant self examination of how we are refusing to live in communion both within the community of faith and beyond it.

When you are preparing to go to communion there are prayers you are advised to recite and meditate upon. One of the most solemn of those prayers is: "When you desire to take the body of the Lord come forward in fear lest you be burned." This is a warning. Your soul is at risk. If you want to pretend you are in communion when you are constantly at war with everyone, then there is a disconnection between your actions and your heart. Not only do we take communion, we must live lives that put us in communion. Communion makes us responsible for the well-being of the people around us, even those we don't like.

**You are describing an embodied commitment to peace that comes from the inside out. Who has lived out this kind of peacemaking?**

One would be Dorothy Day, a founder of the Catholic Worker Movement. I don't think there was a day unless she was really ill or unable to leave her room that she didn't attend mass. She made time in the afternoons to go and pray in a nearby church. She had these long lists of names in her prayer book and Bibles that she prayed for each day. By poking my nose into her books, I discovered that she often prayed for people who had committed suicide. When I knew her, she was an older woman and couldn't walk for long distances but I am sure she spent at least an hour of each day on her knees praying the rosary. She went to confession every Saturday night. With all this religious devotion, Dorothy wasn't self-righteous at all. She just lived it. That impressed me very much.

**With the Middle East locked in another period of unrest, what keeps you from wanting to give up? What can any of us do to promote peace when there seems to be no end of disagreements over land, belief, culture, or a viable political process?**

I believe that we contribute to peace, firstly through prayer. Very often people think that prayer is a waste of time, but it is absolutely the opposite. If we are not praying, there will never be peace in our lives. If we are not praying for peace we will never do anything, or what we do may possibly be harmful rather than helpful because it doesn't have the under-structure. When Jesus says love

your enemies, he immediately says, now pray for them. It is impossible to love a person who terrifies, frightens, or disturbs you if you are not regularly praying for them. Love, of course, in this sense is not necessarily an emotional warm glow. It is a commitment to the life of that person. Peace work is to bring the love of God into the situation, and I don't think that is possible without prayer.

When you are praying, it becomes possible to help bring people together. We've seen some wonderful changes happen in Northern Ireland, although there is still a long way to go. A lot has to do with church-based projects like Corrymeala, which over the years created an environment where people from the two communities could meet. Now most of the time their efforts looked like they were achieving nothing and might all add up to zero. Instead, Corrymeala has inspired people not to despair. People were reminded that the "enemy" was quite an interesting person who under other circumstances could be enjoyable. Similar efforts are taking place in Israel and Palestine. One of my friends is an Orthodox Jew living in Jerusalem and his wife has inherited a house in the occupied territory which once had belonged to a Palestinian family. She decided that the house should become a place used in a penitential way where people could meet. Indeed, during the recent uprisings her village has been one of the more peaceful communities where Palestinians and Jews live side by side.

**With this interpersonal focus on peace, what do you do when you find you are not at peace with someone?**

Every now and then I realize with considerable shock that there is somebody that I really, really should be



praying for and haven't. I know quite well that I am supposed to pray for my enemies so when I realize the extent that I haven't, it hits me with great force. How could I not be praying for that person? One thing my wife and I do is to keep lists of people to pray for since it is so easy to neglect to pray for certain people because you just don't want to. If you were to read in the newspaper tomorrow that this person had been hit by a truck and killed instantly, you might want to say, "He or she had that coming!" The list brings that person ever before me in times of prayer.

I'm writing a book about confession right now and reading a lot about the early church. One of the things that impresses me so much is this pervasive belief that we are capable of conversion. You should never ever want the destruction of anybody. You want to be converted and to continue to be converted and live so that it might be possible for another to be led in the same way. You don't want to get in the way of another's conversion.

**Praying for the conversion of another person is not something all faith traditions do. What does praying or hoping for the conversion of another human being mean to you?**

You don't know what conversion means for another person. It's not your business what God would do in another person's life. Praying for another's conversion is not that you want the person to become a member of the Orthodox church or necessarily a Christian, although you might be personally very happy if that happened. I am always very happy to meet a person who is simply participating in God's mercy, even if completely

unconsciously. I frequently find many merciful people outside of Christianity. When you look at what others are doing and how they are responding to the sense of God's presence that is obviously in them, then you can begin to see their lives are very beautiful. They are "icons" of God's mercy.

**Can you recite a prayer or tell a story from the Orthodox church that illustrates how the Orthodox church is an "icon of God's mercy" in our world?**

A special prayer was added by the Serbian Church to the Holy Liturgy early in the breakdown of Yugoslavia. It includes this petition: *For all those who commit injustice against their neighbors, whether by causing sorrow to orphans, spilling innocent blood or by returning hatred for hatred, that God will grant them repentance, enlighten their minds and their hearts and illumine their souls with the light of love even toward their enemies, let us pray to the Lord.*

In addition to saying this prayer regularly, the most striking and hope-giving gesture since the bombs stopped falling has been Patriarch Pavle's decision to move from Belgrade to Pec, the historic center of the Serbian Orthodox Church, an action he hopes will encourage other Serbs to remain in Kosovo or return from Serbia. It is also a gesture to Kosovo Albanians. If Pavle and the monasteries of Kosovo can give witness of Serbians who love their neighbors, and even their enemies, perhaps there can yet be a multi-ethnic, multi-religious Kosovo.

# ILLUMINATIONS



God is not an idea and praying is not an exercise to improve our idea of God, though for those of us who have spent a good deal of our lives in classrooms, it can be difficult to get beyond the world of ideas. Prayer is the cultivation of the awareness of God's actual presence.

~Jim Forest

*Praying with Icons*

If someone asks you a question about matters sacred, always answer in terms of matters profane. If they ask you about ultimate reality, answer in terms of everyday life. If they ask you about everyday life, answer in terms of ultimate reality.

~Hui-neng

Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch

*What is Zen?*

If your life was not contained in God's cup/ How could you be so brave and laugh/Dance in the face of death?

When all your desires are distilled,/You will cast just two votes:/To love more,/And be happy.

~Hafiz

God sighs to become known in us. God is delivered from solitude by the people in whom God reveals himself. The sorrow of the unknown God is softened through and in us.

~Ibn al-Arabi, 1165-1240



Prayer is so much more than begging for a favor. Prayer is a response to God and to life. It comes from a heart that has been touched. How does a heart touched by God pray? There are many different ways. Sometimes in pure gratitude it simply stands in awe, rejoicing. And that is prayer! Sometimes it weeps. Sometimes it sings. There are times it talks tenderly to God. At other times it might scream out in anger and pain. Sometimes it looks on the world with love, or rushes out to do good deeds. Sometimes it kneels with outstretched arms. It turns and bends and bows. It takes a slow careful walk. It begs for daily bread. It takes long, grateful looks at everything and everyone. Sometimes it merely yearns for God in deep, holy silence. All this is prayer.

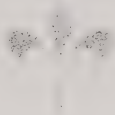
~Macrina Weiderkehr  
*A Tree Full of Angels*

Picasso was right when he said that we do not know what a tree or a window really is. All things are very mysterious and strange (like Picasso's paintings), and we overlook their strangeness and their mystery only because we are so used to them. Only dimly do we understand the nature of things. What are things? They are God's love become things.

God also communicates with us by way of all things. They are messages of love. When I read a book, God is speaking to me through the book. I raise my eyes to look at the countryside: God created it for me to see. The picture I look at today was inspired by God in the painter, for me to see. Everything I enjoy was given lovingly by God for me to enjoy, and even my pain is God's loving gift.

~Ernesto Cardenal

# PRAYING WITH OUR HANDS



## Embodied Prayer in the World's Spiritual Traditions

Text by Jon M. Sweeney  
Photos by Jennifer Wilson

Prayer is the most universal expression of the presence of God. We express devotion, rage, submission, and many other emotions in prayer. We often plead in prayer. In fact, when the professed nonbeliever pleads in prayer at a time of crisis we may say that she is really not a really a nonbeliever after all.

We most often think of prayer as something spoken, but it can also be expressed in other ways. What we say, what we do, and how we do it all express God's presence, when we are prayerful.

When asked to picture prayer in terms of where it happens, most people imagine it arising inside them. There is ancient precedent for this. The sixth-century Christian

*Jon Sweeney is Associate Publisher of Skylight Paths Publishing. He lives in Vermont. Jennifer Wilson is a documentary photographer working in the Boston area. Excerpt from Praying With Our Hands © 2000 by Jon M. Sweeney (Woodstock, VT: SkyLight Paths Publishing). \$16.95 + \$3.50 s/h. Order by mail or call 800-962-4544 or on-line at [www.skylightpaths.com](http://www.skylightpaths.com). Permission granted by SkyLight Paths Publishing, P.O. Box 237, Woodstock, VT 05091.*

mystic St. Isaac the Syrian wrote: "Enter eagerly into the treasure house that lies within you, and so you will see the treasure house of heaven . . . . The ladder that leads to the Kingdom is hidden within you." This understanding has been common in many spiritual traditions.

Our modern understanding may be somewhat more literal. We often see prayer as happening like this: An emotion or an idea wells up inside of us that needs words to express it; the emotion or idea somehow transfers to our brain; there we process the language needed to put it into words. We have been conditioned to think that prayer is mostly a mental activity that it is in some way located in our brains.

*See how  
expressive  
your hands  
can become*

There are exceptions, of course.

Many of us who pray believe with the psalmist of the Hebrew scriptures that there are times when we cannot articulate our feelings in words—when only sighs are possible.

We may experience prayer this way, especially in times of great loss. But even this view of prayer pictures the process in the same way—as a mental process. Our brain either finds the right words for our feelings or ideas, or it doesn't.

Aside from whether or not our feelings, ideas, and brains work this way, this common view of how prayer works does not take into account how our body is involved. We use our bodies to express ourselves in spiritual ways—and these physical expressions can be prayers too. For example, one way to show humility in God's presence is to prostrate oneself, or bow at the waist, or simply bow with the head. Are these



expressions any less meaningful than a spoken prayer, such as “Lord, have mercy on me”?

There is ancient precedent in the spiritual traditions for praying with the body. These next few pages look specifically at the ways we pray with our hands. As you explore these practices, new ways for celebrating and practicing the sacredness of life will open up for you. You will see how everyday actions can be prayerful expressions to God. You will also see how religious ritual is rich with prayer of the body, and how expressive just your hands can become.

Imagine the many emotions your hands already express: They can invite or beckon, repel or reject, hide or reveal, console or protect; they can embrace. When we pray with our hands we are enfleshing the sacred—not just talking to God, or focusing our minds. In our hands, prayer becomes visible.

Our actions and movements can be expressions of prayer to God. We don’t—or shouldn’t—just think our prayers. We can embody the feelings and emotions usually expressed only as spoken or mental prayers in our actions. We can show and express with our bodies what we say and express with our minds. When you practice praying with your hands, the very motions of your body create meaning for your words like sound creates meaning in poetry.

Before you begin to consciously practice praying with your hands, you may want to perform this simple exercise: Extend your hands with palms upward, a gesture of openness to the Divine, and as a gift of your hands to the Source of Life.

ALL OF LIFE IS SACRED IF WE KNOW THAT GOD IS PRESENT

## Work as Prayer

As we bend our bodies to a task, in that bending our bodies and the task become sacred. Mother Ann Lee, founder of the Shakers, was an inspiring and quixotic leader. One of her most important teachings was, like all Shaker work, beautiful in its simplicity: "Hands to work, hearts to God." There are no menial tasks in a world where everything is sacred. Each task is an occasion for us to practice the presence of God. That was the role of a Shaker in the world. How would this simple saying and practice transform your work?

The chambers of thy soul expand,  
And stretch thy tents abroad;  
Clasp Labor in Religion's hand  
And aid the work of God.

—Shaker Hymn





WE ARE DIVINE AGENTS IN THE WORLD

### **Resisting Evil**

Wherever there is evil in the world, there is the potential for good. It is our responsibility to transform it.

Abraham Joshua Heschel spoke of the ways in which God is no longer at home in the Creation because we act as if God doesn't exist. Instead of being divine agents as we should, we effectively remove God from the world with our inaction. Heschel says: "To pray means to bring God back into the world. . . . To pray means to expand God's presence."

We pray with our bodies when we put them in front of tanks. We pray with our hands when we link arms together to fight injustice. We are co-creators with the Divine when we resist evil. The world is more sacred at these moments.





AN ENGAGED SPIRIT CANNOT HELP BUT SHOW ITSELF

### **Practicing Lovingkindness**

For many of us, the most difficult obstacle to overcome in spiritual practice is our fear of silence. It is difficult, for instance, to find a place where you can stand for fifteen minutes without hearing a non-natural sound. And if you try it, you may even find that you've become so used to the "comfort" of noise that prolonged periods of quiet make you uncomfortable.

Too much noise and too little silence combine to desensitize us in many ways. But when we practice becoming more aware of the spiritual, we engage with the world around us even in simple, seemingly inconsequential ways. These actions show our spirit.

The Buddhist tradition teaches that it is important to cultivate lovingkindness. To do this, we change how we treat people, animals, and all things. We direct love and compassion their way. This means handling objects gently, avoiding loud speech, and refraining from roughness of all kinds. Our spirit is in our hands.

“The practice of touching things deeply on the horizontal level gives us the capacity to touch God. . . . We can touch the noumenal world by touching the phenomenal world deeply.”

—Thich Nhat Hanh

#### CONSECRATING OURSELVES

#### **Holy Water**

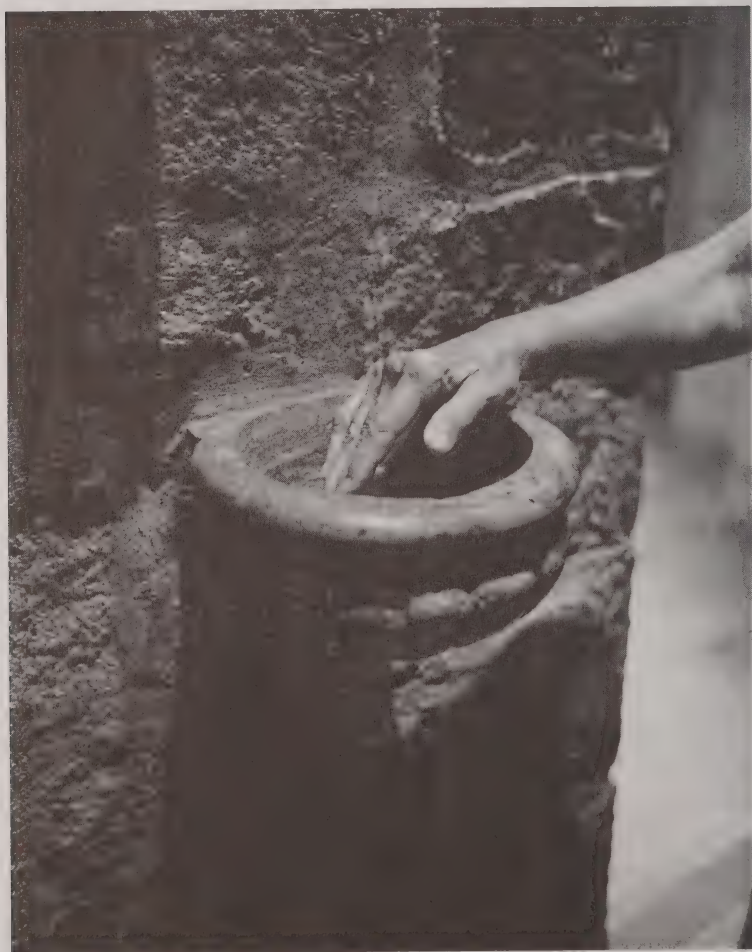
Water has always had mystical meanings for people. The early Greek philosophers believed that the earth was like a disc, around which flowed a great river on all sides. Most religious traditions use washing in water as a personal means of preparing ceremonially for prayer, meditation, or spiritual service. These ritual cleansings are symbols of our need for spiritual cleanliness—expressed through our hands.

One of these beautiful practices is the Hindu’s devotion to Ganga, the goddess of the Ganges, India’s most sacred river. Once a heavenly tributary, according to tradition, for millions the Ganges is a sacred place for daily physical and spiritual cleansing. Outside India, Hindus bathe in the spirit of Ganga, in water set aside for this purpose.

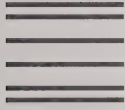
In Catholic tradition, water is sanctified by a priest and used for personal and community worship, sometimes

sprinkled on worshippers, or simply touched upon entering a sacred place.

Consecrating ourselves with holy water can be a way to signify a separation from the things that deceive, or sully, us as we enter a sacred place. Sometimes a touch can help restore our spiritual focus.







NO POSTAGE  
NECESSARY  
IF MAILED  
IN THE  
UNITED STATES



**BUSINESS REPLY MAIL**  
FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO.50 PRINCETON, NJ

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

**FELLOWSHIP  
IN PRAYER, INC.**  
Publishers of **SACRED JOURNEY®**  
291 Witherspoon Street  
Princeton, NJ 08542-9946





The suggested donation for a year of *Sacred Journey* is \$18.00. Many readers, however, send more than that amount as a way of becoming a “Spiritual Friend” to those unable to contribute (especially men and women in hospitals, nursing and old age homes, and religious institutions).

In addition to sending in your own contribution and request to receive *Sacred Journey*, won’t you become a “Spiritual Friend” to someone in need? You will earn their lasting gratitude—and ours.

☐ I enclose \$18.00 (\$26.00 for foreign subscriptions). Please send *Sacred Journey* to me:

(name) \_\_\_\_\_

(street) \_\_\_\_\_

(city, state, zip) \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Renewal

☐ New Listing

☐ I enclose \$ \_\_\_\_\_. Please send a gift subscription to:

(name) \_\_\_\_\_

(street) \_\_\_\_\_

(city, state, zip) \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I enclose \$ \_\_\_\_\_. Please send *Sacred Journey* to someone in need, or use it to promote the practice of prayer and meditation.

☐ Please remove my name from your mailing list.

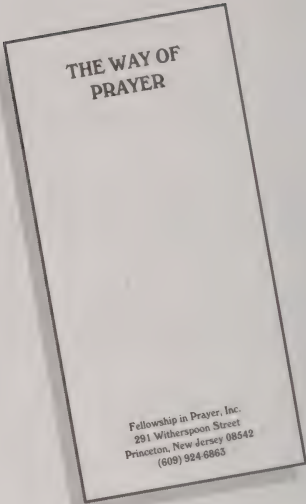
Please use the back of this sheet for your comments.



*The Way of Prayer* answers the questions of many readers who have asked us specific questions about prayer: When, where, and how to pray; what to pray for; what you can expect from prayer; how to form a prayer group.

Copies are \$2.00 each. Now in its 3rd printing, *The Way of Prayer* has clearly filled a widely-felt need.

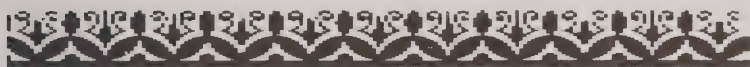
☐ Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ copies of *The Way of Prayer*. I enclose my check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_.



\* \* \* \* \*

Please use this space to tell us your thoughts about this publication, *Sacred Journey*.

# A T R A N S F O R M I N G E X P E R I E N C E



## The Day God Talked to Me

Gerry Lancto

It was a typical winter day on the coast; cold, cloudy, and damp. As we drove onto the island, there were few signs of life to greet us. Most of the houses had been boarded up for the season. The one small convenience store with gas pumps in front was closed. A beaten-up blue pickup truck passed us as we made our way to the cottage on the end of the island. Other than that, there were no apparent signs of any human habitants. It was quite a contrast to the hot summer days when traffic jammed the streets and people were everywhere.

We liked coming here in the winter. There was a calmness and a feeling of peacefulness that was unique and special. Don and I had been coming to this island for forty years. Everything had changed and yet nothing had changed. The salty smell in the air, the waves breaking on the shore, the miles of open ocean closed by the horizon, the calls of the sea gulls, the sand dunes sculptured by the wind. It was an ever-changing scene. Oh yes, there were more houses, a larger bridge, and even a waterslide on the Northern end of the island, but none

*Gerry Lancto and her husband have been married for fifty years and live in North Carolina.*

of this could change the feeling that this was our own private haven.

As we drove up to the little cottage, it blended in with the greyness of the day yet it was a welcome sight. We made our way up the front steps, carrying our heavy suitcases with difficulty. We both had to stop and catch our breath before we opened the door. Very little had been updated and most of the furnishings had been here since we first moved in fifty years ago. Everything was old and worn but it had served its purpose. Each piece of furnishing had a special place in my heart.

Don started a fire in the fireplace. The smell of the burning wood and the crackling flames sending warmth through the cottage dispelled the greyness of the day and made us feel as if we were home. We sat on the couch in front of the fire. Don put his arm around me and drew me close. "Well, mother bird, we made it one more year, didn't we?" I snuggled closer in total contentment. Here I was in one of my favorite places, sharing it with the man I loved, the man who had shared my joys and sorrows for more than half a century. I savored the moment . . . I felt secure and fulfilled and wanted the moment to last forever. There were so many of these wonderful moments in my life. We had our share of tragedies, but on these I would not dwell. They had served to make the precious moments more poignant and better appreciated. My reverie was suddenly interrupted by the banging of a loose shutter.

"The wind seems to be picking up, I think I'll go out for a walk on the beach before it gets any later and colder," I said to Don.

"Do you really want to go out?" he asked. "Why don't you wait until tomorrow? It will start getting dark within the hour," he added.

"After sitting in the car for five hours, I really need some exercise to stretch these old muscles before they atrophy," I answered. "I'll only take a short walk on the beach. Besides, I just have to have a few minutes to feast my eyes on the beautiful ocean, our ocean, our beach with no one that I have to share it with."

It was always nice to have our family with us but sometimes I became resentful of the hordes of people that invaded our privacy in the summer. For so many years we were the only cottage on the south end of the island, and no matter how many people moved in, it would always still be Our Island.

I bundled myself in a heavy woolen, hooded parka, wrapped a scarf snugly around my neck and headed out to face the elements. I followed the narrow winding path over the dunes to the beach. As I had anticipated the beach was deserted except for my friends the sea gulls. The gulls were lazily drifting aloft with no apparent agenda. With it being too cold for fish to be in the waters, it made me wonder how they managed to live. Their lethargy fitted into the mood of the beach. The low hanging clouds closed in the vista, and everything in sight seemed to take on the greyness of the day. It was a comforting and gentle greyness giving me the feeling of isolated protection. Although the wind had started to blow in earnest, the water was still calm and the waves rolled softly onto the beach. With the wind at my back, I didn't even feel the cold. I became immersed in the beauty of the beach stretching for miles in front of me, the sounds of the sea gulls and the breaking surf, the clear fresh smell of the salty ocean and the wonderful feeling of being where I belonged. I had come back home and the greyness enveloped me like a velvet blanket, welcoming and





comforting. My body was old but my mind could still visualize running along the beach, leaping into the air, dashing away from the waves as they broke along the shore. I was a young woman, enjoying the beach as I had for so many years. The minutes flew by until suddenly I realized that I had walked quite a distance. I didn't know quite where I was since the dunes obliterated the view of the cottages but I knew it was time to start back.

As I turned and faced into the wind, it took my breath away. I hadn't realized how much the wind had increased. I took a deep breath, lowered my head and started my way back. It was an effort to walk against the wind. I tried to walk faster but rapidly became breathless and was forced to slow my pace. The sand was being

blown through the air and stinging my face. I wrapped my scarf around my head leaving just my eyes unprotected. It was starting to get dark and the wind was piercingly cold. Making progress against the wind seemed to be getting more and more difficult. I was so tired but in the distance I could see the slight turn in the beach and just beyond, there was the path through the dunes to our cottage. I was cold, tired, and out of breath, but exhilarated. I was facing a challenge and I was winning.

Then, a sudden, unbelievably sharp pain in my chest made me gasp for breath. Was this what a heart attack felt like? I laughed to myself, maybe I wasn't going to win this one. Unable to continue I sat down on the cold sand.

"Is this it God?" I asked. No reply. The pain seemed to be the answer to my query.

"It's okay, God, I can't think of a place from which I would rather embark for the next life." I added.

The fullness and the richness of my life passed before me like a super fast-forward film. "I've had it all, Lord, and I thank you for the many blessings you've bestowed upon me, for the wonderful children you allowed me to help you create, for a loving husband. I'm hurting really badly, Lord. I just don't have time to thank you for everything but you know what's in my heart. Just one regret Heavenly Father. I wish I had done more for others to show my appreciation for all you have done for me.

A voice came out of the darkness, kind but firm. "You're right, it would have been nice if you had given more of yourself to others. But understand, my child, even as you stand before the bridge to eternity, you continue to pile up rewards for good works." "But how is that possible?" I asked. The voice answered, "Every good deed performed by your children and your children's children

and their children until the end of time is credited to your ledger. You earned these benefits. You have invested a lifetime of love and sacrifice for your children. For this you will be repaid a thousand times over. Do you remember my words in the Old Testament, 'Children are a gift from God. They are his reward.' That reward is greater than you could have ever imagined. It is never ending."

"But Lord, please answer me," I implored, "What of the evil they may do? They are not angels, as you well know. Will I be punished for their bad deeds?"

"My poor child, don't you understand? That's what Christianity is all about. My beautiful son gave his life so that sins could be forgiven and once forgiven, they are forgotten. The good is never forgotten.

A complete peace settled over me. I was ready to cross that bridge, unafraid and with great expectations. I was no longer cold or in pain. My struggle with nature and life had appeared to cease. Soon the pain ended, and I found my way home.

Less than six months after this experience, our youngest daughter gave birth to an infant with an underdeveloped brain and a malignant tumor. She became aware of this tragic situation just as she went into labor. The ordeal ended three days after the birth when the baby died. It was a stressful time for all involved, especially the parents. I was privileged to be by my daughter's side to give her much needed support, prayers, and love.

At the time of the beach incident, I didn't feel that my presence here on earth was of significance. This experience taught me otherwise. I realized God has plans for me and will use me as he sees fit as long as I live. I accept this with love and gratitude.

# P O E T R Y



## In The First World

Corinne De Winter

In the first world  
I walked on water,  
Fearless of sin or fire.  
My hair was sable  
Flecked with silver.

In the first world  
I learned to be poetry.

I watched faces swim ecstasy  
Around me.  
I painted wilderness.  
I leapt from buildings  
And trusted the saints  
To catch me.

In the first world  
I developed like a Polaroid.

I was temptation,  
I was Eden.  
And the angels clutched their hearts,  
Pulled their curls  
And sighed for me.

*Corinne DeWinter's poetry has appeared in our journal for many years. She lives in Massachusetts.*



# Once

John Wolf

You ask about this flower  
in my hair.

It's His doing.

You ask about this fragrance?

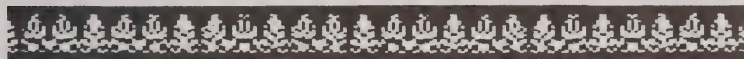
Once He laid His sacred  
hand upon my cheek,

and through all  
the foolish washings  
of all my years

the scent remains.

*John Wolf is a freelance writer and student of comparative religions. His poetry explores mysticism as the common thread among religions and as a path to inner peace.*

# SPIRITUAL AWARENESS



## Being Centered at the Center of Being

Alison Davis

Here in New England, we are in the time of the thaw, a few days of warm weather to help us through the coldest weeks of the year. Two days ago, the temperature rose above freezing and the rains came to wash away the snow, swell the streams and cause the rivers to overflow. From under the snow, green grass appeared and tiny purple johnny-jump-ups were still blooming. Such a wonder!

On this early morning before dawn I stand a few moments by the open window. The lightening countryside is clean and fresh and the air is clear. The morning star sparkles and a fragile new moon floats in the western sky.

I, too, feel fresh and clear and take this moment to reflect on a new insight that has helped me.

For a long time, I thought I was just my physical body, and spirit was Someone Else, "out there" someplace. Then I was taught to think I was not my body. Spirit became "I, myself, and me," part of the "out there" which was for a

*Alison Davis is the founder and director of The Universal Third Order, an interfaith spiritual community in Connecticut. This article is reprinted from Beloved Companions: Letters on A Way of Wonder, ©1996 by Alison Davis, published by Little River Press, 1026 Pomfret Road, Hampton, CT 06247. Used by permission.*

time "in here." I was an entity coming from beyond and from before, putting on this body-clothing for a lifetime and then discarding it like an old worn-out suit and going on. I was taught that my body was to be respected as the temple of the soul, merely a building in which I could reside for a while. I was taught that "I am *not* my body. I am *not* my mind. I am *not* my emotions." I am something else, a higher self above the inferior bodily lower self.

I never felt quite comfortable with this teaching and always thought, "But I *am* my body, mind, and emotions.

*The body is an  
amazing  
instrument  
transforming  
spiritual  
energy into  
daily deeds.*

And I am *also* spirit. I am all of a piece, one. Now with new thinking many people are accepting the paradoxes of life and saying either/or has become both/and. This material body is both matter and spirit. How can this be? A few weeks ago, I found out.

One day in a sudden flash, I *experienced* the presence of a living energy in the center of every cell in my body and knew that I was not higher and lower self, not body, mind, and soul, but all one. I knew with a crystal-clear certainty a truth I have formerly known only intellectually.

I had known that the scientists who probed more and more deeply into matter, seeking the most infinitesimal particle of existence, did not find some solid, changeless lump of material; at the very basic level of all matter they found a moving, living kind of energy that equates with a mystic's experience of the universal spirit, or God.

Mystics have always said, "All is One." The new scientific knowledge helps us understand this truth as

we find it in our daily lives.

For most people, God used to be “out and up there,” seldom “in and down here,” but now, these people are listening to the physicists (whom they trust more than mystics) and hearing that the body is made up of thousands of minute cells, each one at it’s core a mystery. We, as mystics, might call this basic essence life-force or cosmic energy or divine consciousness—any word is too little for that amazing power that infuses and energizes every tiny bit of existence. I am the universal spirit coming into life in this world. And so are you! And the whole Earth, too. Every cell of everyone and everything is God being manifested.

This new way of thinking clarifies our relationship with other beings and with all matter. If we all have the same essence, then we are truly one, all part of this great whatever-it-is that moves and lives. If I hurt you, then don’t I hurt myself? And if I love the Something or Someone I have experienced, don’t I really love you in the deepest way? When I love you, I love the divine essence I find in you which resonates with the same essence in me.

“All is one” is balanced by “all are different.” Although the essence may be the same, the pattern or form is always unique. Our lives are enriched by the abundant variety of humans and other living creatures of Earth and so we can welcome the diversity within the unity. This clarification makes it easier for me to accept you and not try to change you, only try to help you fully manifest your own unique pattern.

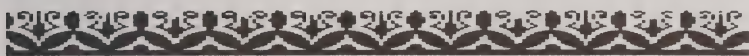
When we realize all the cells of the body are divine consciousness, then we can better understand inner knowing. If we listen with the whole body, we can know



things we could never realize from head-thinking alone. Listening to the body is not just feeling its physical condition. We can become conscious of a deeper level and find arising, like the fragrance of a flower, the essence of sacredness from the totality of all of the cells.

From the new experiencing of truth, I find a new respect for my body as one of the myriad manifestations of God. As such, it is always precious. It is not merely a liability that holds me back from living life fully. It is the amazing instrument which transforms spiritual energy into the deeds of daily life. It is the source of my courage and of my joy, for through the divinity of every cell I am connected to the Source of all strength.

# THE WAYS OF PRAYER



## Accept A Mystery

Arthur Caliendo

Many of us love mysteries. We like nothing more than to read a mystery novel or watch a movie. We like to watch as little clues are provided about the final outcome. Then, when the mystery is resolved or the case is solved, we enjoy the moment when we finally say, “Aha! Now I know what has been going on through this story.” Or even. “I knew the real outcome all along.”

Connecting with a higher power can work in a similar way because often, as part of the process, we receive mysterious ideas, words, phrases—even directives—commands, if you will. If we are willing to accept these mysterious clues, we can often engage in a remarkable process of self-discovery.

Mysteries do come to us in prayer, mysteries that contain missions and issues that we are to think about and deal with. I remember a time in my own life when my life seemed to be in good shape. Family, health, job—

*Dr. Arthur Caliendo is Senior Minister of Marble Collegiate Church in New York City and a trustee of Fellowship in Prayer. Through weekly radio and cable television programs, he regularly brings inspiration and insight to hundreds of thousands of people. Excerpted from Simple Steps: Ten Things You Can Do to Create an Exceptional Life by Dr. Caliendo with Barry Levenson, © 2000 by The McGraw-Hill Companies. Used by permission.*



everything appeared to be balanced. But underneath, I was churning. I knew something was wrong. I was unsettled, unfocused, anxious.

And at times when I felt most unsettled, I found myself uttering different kinds of prayers. I must have experimented with a dozen different kinds of prayer in an effort to fix my inner turmoil. Then, one morning I read the Biblical story of Jesus and a blind man. Jesus asked what he could do to help,

and the man answered, enigmatically, "That I might recover my sight."

After I read this passage, I went out for my morning walk. And suddenly, an idea came to me very strongly, really in the form of a command.

I found myself saying, "Arthur, that is your prayer, 'that I might receive my sight.' You are to pray this prayer."

Its meaning was still cloudy for me, but I knew that it was to become my prayer for the foreseeable future. It was a mystery—both puzzling and somehow elating. I began to pray it often, many times a day. I was confident it was right, and I trusted that one day, my inner churning would be settled.

Several months later, some wonderful things happened in my life. I thought, "This is it, my prayer has been answered!" I was elated.

Yet that high was followed in a few days by a more than corresponding low. I found myself facing surgery, at a time when Dr. Norman Vincent Peale had just retired and I was newly in charge at Marble Collegiate Church. I was just beginning my life there after his departure. And then, four weeks after his retirement, I was hospitalized with open-heart surgery.

The timing was terrible! And to tell the truth, I didn't handle it well at first. I was numb. I lost faith in everything. I couldn't pray. I was in a fog. If I were to describe my state with colors, I was dark gray, almost black.

Although I didn't know it at the time, my prayer was being answered. While I was in the hospital, a surgeon said to me, "Arthur, you know this kind of thing doesn't just happen," meaning my illness wasn't a result of external forces. My internal state had contributed to my sickness.



What did he mean, I needed to know. I listened and took his advice. At his urging, I started to work with a psychiatrist. I began to get in touch with my emotional material. I began the processes of addressing many things that were wrong in my life.

I began a long process of learning. The clogged arteries that required bypass were the symptoms of deeper problems. I needed expert, professional help to get in touch with my issues.

Then one day, I realized all the pain and confusion, the illness and the surgery, were answers to my prayer. The mystery was solved.

My "sight" was a new, deeper level of understanding about myself, my past, and my world. I didn't get to my new level of sight through some "click" or instant cure from above. I had to pass through very tough times and work hard. But in the end, my prayer was answered, my mystery solved.

I'd also like to share with you the good news about the prayer that I live with day and night now. In fact, I think it may have become my prayer for life. I received my impetus to begin praying with it when I was in another dark, difficult period. It seems I do my learning and growing when I am facing hard times.

You know the saying, "When the student is ready, the teacher appears"? It is my life story. During this period, I was lonely, depressed and I had lost the essence of my faith. I believed in God, but I didn't trust myself to God for the next five minutes. I was trying to solve all problems in my own way.

Then I came upon a prayer, I had known about—a prayer called "The Jesus Prayer." I began to use it, and it has probably become my prayer for life. . .

*Lord, Jesus Christ, have mercy on me,  
make haste to help me, rescue me and save me,  
do your will in my life.*

That prayer suddenly spoke to me in some deep, resonant way. I did as I learned one must do with this prayer. I prayed it constantly, without ceasing. I began repeating it hundreds and hundreds and thousands and thousands of times. I pray it day after day—in the elevator, when I'm walking, even when I'm in conversation. I discovered it is a way to try to stay open to the movement of a higher power to lead me to where I'm supposed to be going, what I'm supposed to be doing. The last line—*do your will in my life*—is the bottom line to all prayer. To submit to divine will.

In a few days I realized my crisis of faith had passed—I was trusting God. And I began to experience a series of coincidences—those mysterious happenings no human can arrange.

My mysterious relationship with this little prayer may have a real, final revelation—one of those “Aha!” moments when I suddenly encounter its deep message for me. Or that message may be revealed to me every day as I experience the power of this prayer to direct and transform my life.

I don't know exactly why this prayer has become mine. I don't know where it is leading me. It's a mystery—but the mystery is good. Life, after all, is a mystery—more enjoyable than the best mystery novel, more profound than any I know. Often, its clues come to us in the quietest, most private times of prayer and personal reflection.

Open up. Let them in.

# SPIRITUAL PRACTICE



## The Art of Sacred Chant

Laura Bernstein

My introduction to the wonder of sacred chant was at a Jewish renewal retreat center in Accord, New York, called Elat Chayyim (which translates “Goddess of life”—a sure sign that this institution is indeed one of renewal). There I took a class with a gifted rabbi named Shefa Gold, who, to the beat of a drum, led about seventy of us through a variety of Hebrew chants which she had composed, the words drawn from the Bible (especially Psalms) and liturgy. For three hours a day over the course of five days, we opened our hearts to a fuller experience of the Divine and planted seeds within ourselves with the intention of cultivating a particular quality (such as love, trust, discipline or joy) that would enhance our lives. The quality I chose to cultivate was confidence. The experience turned out to be one of the most powerful spiritual encounters of my life.

### Opening Spiritual Doorways

What is it about the repetition of a musical phrase that

*Laura Bernstein is a rabbinical student, a composer of poems, songs, and chants, and an active member of Common Ground, an interfaith forum in Chicago. This article originally appeared in the Summer 1999 issue of American Venturist and is reprinted by permission.*

opens spiritual doorways, that enables us to feel the presence of God? For one thing, the body itself becomes an instrument, uniquely capable of connecting with and transmitting a flow of energy. Breath combines with sound, melody combines with harmony, rhythm combines with movement to create awareness of our higher selves, our deeper selves. The group energy that is generated has the capacity to touch the transcendent dimension and bring it into contact with the immanent dimension. Inner and outer, within and beyond become one in this highly charged atmosphere of opening the heart. God is everywhere.

Of course, God is always everywhere, but usually we're less intimately acquainted with that realization. Sacred chant opens up channels of awareness that everyone and everything is part of Divinity, and each is connected to the other. Like all authentic spiritual experiences, a sense of unity consciousness occurs that allows us to relax our rigid boundaries and become more permeable. This shift in consciousness is accompanied by joy. It feels good to feel God in oneself and one's companions. It creates trust, reinforces optimism, and empowers us on our journeys.

Another important aspect concerns the words themselves. These are powerful phrases selected from sacred literature. Certainly the Hebrew language is part of the impact because of the particular vibrational quality of this holy tongue. I have been told that Sanskrit is equally powerful. While it might be more advantageous to chant in one language than another, I believe that all languages are vehicles to the Divine. If your attitude is sincere and your intention pure, I am convinced you can get there in English, Italian, Latin, or Swahili (there, of course, is here).



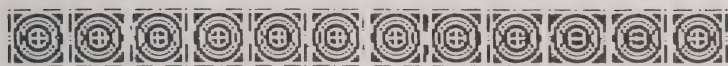
While the words are crucial vehicles ("I gratefully acknowledge You, living, enduring Spirit," "My cup overflows," "A pure heart create for me, God"), in repetition, they become like a mantra, so that the cognitive meaning recedes and the numinous presence of holy Oneness takes over. The drum becomes like a communal heartbeat. Our eyes are closed, so if we choose to move our bodies to the rhythm we are not self-conscious. After chanting a particular phrase for perhaps ten or fifteen minutes (sometimes in patterns that include harmony and counterpoint) we sit in silence and allow the chant to penetrate to the marrow of our bones, to the recesses of our souls. The silence is as important as the sound—together they provide an ambiance of receptivity to God consciousness.

### **A Seed Grows into a Tree**

My seed of confidence planted at that retreat, watered by tears of joy and devotion, sprouted and grew, first into a fragile seedling requiring protective care, later into a sturdy bush and more recently into a small tree. I began to lead chanting sessions in an interfaith context at retreats sponsored by Common Ground, an interfaith study center in Deerfield, Illinois, and to compose some of my own chants. In January of this year, I had the opportunity to teach Hebrew chants to monks at the Abbey of Gethsemani in Kentucky, the Trappist monastery where Thomas Merton lived his monastic life. What an unexpected treat.

Sacred chant continues to be an integral part of my spiritual life, an opening to ecstasy, to contemplation, and to the spaciousness of pure awareness. The interplay between sound, silence, and holiness is an awesome one, indeed.

# P R A Y E R S



## A Prayer for God's World

*Inspired by Chief Seattle and found in the United Methodist Book of Worship*

Every part of this earth is sacred.  
Every shining pine needle, every sandy shore,  
every mist in the dark woods,  
every clearing and humming insect is holy.

The rocky crest, the meadow, the beasts and all the  
people, all belong to the same family.  
Teach your children that the earth is our mother.  
Whatever befalls the earth befalls the children of the earth.  
We are part of the earth, and the earth is a part of us.

The rivers are our brothers, they quench our thirst.  
The perfumed flowers are our sisters, the air is  
precious, for all of us share the same breath.

The wind that gave our grandparents breath also  
received their last sigh.  
The wind gave our children the spirit of life.

This we know, the earth does not belong to us.  
We belong to the earth.

This we know, all things are connected.  
Like the blood which unites one family,  
all things are connected.

Our God is the same God, whose compassion is equal for all.  
For we did not weave the web of life.  
We are merely a strand in it.

Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves.  
Let us give thanks for the web and the circle that connects us.

Thanks be to God, the God of all.

## A Prayer of the Hindu Mystic Santideva

May I become a medicine for the sick and their physician,  
their support until sickness come not again. May I become  
an unfailing store for the wretched, and be first to supply  
them with their needs. My own self and my pleasures,  
my righteousness past, present, and future, may I sacrifice  
without regard, in order to achieve the welfare of beings.

## BOOKS WE'VE ENJOYED



*Dancing on the Edge by Richard Holloway. Published by HarperCollins Religious, 1997, 200 pages, paperback.*

*What is Tao? What is Zen? by Alan Watts. Published by New World Library, 1996, 128 pages, paperback.*

For many Christians, the spiritual life is important, and the meaning and example of Jesus Christ still powerfully influences the way they try to lead their lives. But the rigidities and hypocrisy of the Church in which they were brought up has driven them from it. In this deeply thoughtful and compassionate book, Bishop Richard Holloway explores the problems and the possibilities of reconciliation between belief and unbelief and shares with us his own insights into a way of understanding the mystery of faith and trust in God without being turned away by the language or organizational and ethical systems of the Church. "Christianity invites us to a generous and open-hearted commitment to God," he tells us, "though not necessarily to the words we use to talk about God or the systems we develop to respond to God. The journey is a more appropriate symbol of the Christian life than a building rooted to the spot." If you know anyone who is torn between belief and unbelief, give them this book! If your local bookseller doesn't have it, try [www.amazon.com.uk](http://www.amazon.com.uk).

~Paul Walsh



Some aged things, like wine and wisdom, get distilled and finer. Alan Watts, who died in 1973, was for forty years a famous philosopher and writer who introduced a generation to the subjects of Eastern thought and meditation. In his later years, he gave elegant, image-rich short talks on Taoism and Zen that were tape recorded by his son, Mark. These tapes were recently packaged as small, easy to read books of vintage musings. In *What is Tao?* Watts describes the principle *wu wei*, often translated as “non-obstruction.” When applied to human activity, *wu wei* is best understood as “not standing in your own light when working.” Now that’s an image that helps me understand how to live in the flow of my own nature and gifts rather than stumbling over my own two feet, as I often do when trying to follow someone else’s instructions.

In *What is Zen?* Watts notes that people often remark that gurus—including Zen masters—have wonderful eyes that seem to peer right through them. He says, “It’s no wonder the guru has a funny look—they are beholding the incongruity between the divine being that looks out through your eyes and the expression on your face!” In other words, the guru sees the “Buddha, Brahma, or whatever you want to call it,” looking out through the student’s eyes and “pretending not to be at home.” In a hide-and-seek style Watts describes the Zen practice of *sanzen*, the regular meeting of a teacher and student. The teacher’s job is to cajole you out of “playing that you are someone other than who you really are.” Watt deserves extra credit for introducing two of the world’s enigmatic spiritual traditions in a whimsical and well-tested manner.

~Rebecca Laird

## **FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER, INC.**

291 Witherspoon Street  
Princeton, New Jersey 08542-3227  
Phone: 609-924-6863  
Fax: 609-924-6910  
E-mail: [editorial@sacredjourney.org](mailto:editorial@sacredjourney.org)  
Website: [sacredjourney.org](http://sacredjourney.org)

### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Paul Walsh

### **EDITOR**

Rebecca Laird

### **ART DIRECTOR**

Laurel Masten Cantor

### **PRODUCTION MANAGER**

Linda D. Baumann

### **TRUSTEES EMERITUS**

Kathryn G. Brown  
Rabbi Samuel M. Silver

### **TRUSTEES**

Paul Walsh

*President*

Howard S. Ende

*Vice President and Treasurer*

Frederick J. Olessi

*Vice President and Secretary*

Rev. Dr. Joseph C. Williamson

*Vice President*

Rev. Dr. Arthur Caliendo

Venerable Gelongma Trime Lhamo

Ann Quinn

Lorraine Sciarra

© Copyright 2001 Fellowship in Prayer, Inc. All rights reserved. *SACRED JOURNEY* is a registered trademark of Fellowship in Prayer, Inc.

## **Vol. 52, No. 1**

Material in this publication is copyrighted and may not be reproduced by photocopy or any other means without written permission.

For six bi-monthly issues of *SACRED JOURNEY*, send your name, address, and \$18 (\$26 international) to Fellowship in Prayer, 291 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ 08542-3227.

We welcome articles on prayer, meditation, spiritual experience, religious faith or practices, and similar topics. Preference is given to experiential manuscripts. Manuscripts should not exceed 1500 words and may be submitted on disk and sent to The Editor, *SACRED JOURNEY*, 291 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ 08542-3227. Please include a brief biography.

We sometimes share subscribers' names and addresses with other non-profit, spiritual organizations. If you don't wish your name shared, let us know.

### **Bookstores & Retreat Centers:**

Would you like to carry *SACRED JOURNEY*? Call us at 609-924-6863 to order in bulk.

**ISSN 1096-5939**

FELLOWSHIP  
IN P

RAYE, INC.

Publishers of *SACRED JOURNEY*™

291 Witherspoon Street

Princeton, New Jersey 08542

Address service requested

Nonprofit.org

U.S. postage

PAID

Hanover, PA 17331

Permit no. 4